# Ingredients of a great remake

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A story by Rezzee—enjoy.

## It was a chilly late summer night in 1998

I remember the first time I experienced Resident Evil 2 on the original PlayStation. My friend was lucky enough to get the game for his birthday, and I bravely volunteered to be the strategy guide co-pilot. I was sitting on the floor with a keychain flashlight in my hand, the only comfort in the dark room aside from the ominous light projected from the 19-inch non-HD television screen. A terrifying voice sounded from the TV, signaling our descent into the horrors that would follow.

**“RESIDENT EVIL. TWO.”**

The next six hours would be a combination of frantic searching for ink ribbons, green herbs, ammo, and taking frequent breaks on the pause screen to breathe. It was a single player game, but I remember it as a co-op game because of the teamwork that was required to get to the end. Resident Evil 2 would end up being one of the games that made me fall in love with the survival/horror genre. Alongside classics like Silent Hill, Dino Crisis, and Fatal Frame, I remember it fondly. The franchise has released several games since then, but nothing really came close to matching my experience from that night 20 years ago. It’s one of those things that you always remember like it was yesterday and a standard one would hold future games to.

## 20 years later

When someone talks about their favorite game, you'll often hear them say, "I wish I could play it again for the first time." That is a line I said many times when speaking of Resident Evil 2, and on Jan. 25th, 2019 my wish came true with the release of the Resident Evil 2 Remake. Much like that night back in 1998, I found myself on the floor with my controller, lights off, snacks on the coffee table, and determined to go through the game in one sitting like I had all those years ago. I was excited, but I wasn't sure what to expect. I had intentionally avoided all media coverage after the initial E3 trailer, and I knew they had totally remade the game from the ground up. I started my new save, ready to experience the horrors in Racoon City all over again.

When the credits rolled several hours later, all I could do was sit there and smile. It is difficult to make a game. Even harder to make a great game. Imagine then, the care required to deliver a great game that also perfectly captures the feel of its original version 20 years later, while also making it a fresh experience for newcomers and returning players.

# Ingredients of a great remake

It didn't take long to start thinking about what is most important to me when playing a remake of a beloved game. Ideally, some or all of these are included in a remake of a classic game.

## The remake modernizes the gameplay of the original

Resident Evil 2 launched in 1998 with fixed camera angles and tank-like movement for its characters. Since then, the series introduced the fan favorite over-the-shoulder camera in Resident Evil 4 and took the remake opportunity to give a new feel to the game. This is a great example of how a remake can use new gameplay mechanics to update a classic game, without sacrificing the core experience.

## The remake builds on the original story

As a fan of story driven games, I love it when developers use remakes to detail the universe and story a bit more fully. Whether that means experiencing certain events in the game through another character or having an extra chapter between major events to better tie things together, remakes offer us a chance to see more of the games we loved so much the first time around. These additional details also ensure returning players have something new to look forward to!

## The remake does not remove or alter iconic moments in the game

Games have their well-known moments that are always brought up in conversations when talking about them. Can you imagine going back to Halo 2 and not hearing Master Chief say, “I need a weapon”? How about playing Final Fantasy VII and not getting to experience the Golden Saucer? When I think about my favorite games getting the remake treatment, I immediately think about the memorable moments and how those will play out in updated graphics. One of the most important things to me as a fan of the game, is to not lose out on those iconic moments. It’s a difficult task to be sure, especially since the definition of what is a key moment or event can vary by person.

## The remake soundtrack is faithful to the original

When I think about games like Halo, Final Fantasy, or even Need for Speed Underground 2, one of the first things that comes to mind is their exceptional soundtrack. Go listen to the “Rock Anthem for Saving the World (Halo: Combat Evolved)”, “Force Your Way (Final Fantasy VIII)”, or “Riders on the Storm (NFS Underground 2)” and let the memories come flooding back. Since soundtracks are so important to a lot of games, I think it’s important that the remake soundtracks are faithful to the originals. They don’t have to be exact, but the identifying melodies and mood of the updated music should feel like it belongs. Bonus points if the remake includes the option to go back to the original soundtrack!

### Include assets from the original game in an “Extras” menu

Is there any force more powerful on Earth than “Nostalgia Goggles”? I’m, of course, referring to the weird feeling of looking at a remake and swearing that’s how it looked in the original. It’s not until you go back and see screenshots or gameplay videos from the original that you realize how far games have come since that first iteration of the game you’re playing. One of the best experiences I’ve had in gaming was playing Halo 2 Anniversary and having the ability to switch between original Xbox graphics and the new graphics on Xbox One with the press of a button. Obviously not all games will have this option, but even including character models, concept art, screenshots, and video content from the original game in an “Extras” menu is a neat thing to see!

## What’s on your “Remake Ingredient” list?

Do you have “must include” elements when you think about a remake of your favorite game? Do you have any games that you’d like to see remade? Let us know in the comments below!